

# CROSSLTOWN ROAD DEEMED FAR OFF

## Expressway Downtown Has Not Even Been Approved, the Mayor Points Out

### HE ASSURES RESIDENTS

## Tells Them They Will Not Be Moved for Some Time— Cannot Give Timetable

By CHARLES G. BENNETT

The city is not likely to act soon to carry out plans for a Lower Manhattan Expressway beyond the steps already taken, Mayor Wagner indicated yesterday. He regretted, he said, that he could not give an "exact timetable" for the project's construction.

The artery, estimated to cost \$88,000,000 to \$100,000,000, is to link the Holland Tunnel and the West Side Highway with the Manhattan and Williamsburg Bridges, running along Canal and contiguous streets. The road will be elevated except for a section beneath the Chrystie Street subway.

The Mayor made it clear that relocation of tenants and businesses from the route would have a high priority in the construction plans.

### Residents Are Assured

Mr. Wagner assured residents of the lower East Side area through which the artery will be built that none would be required to move out of the region for some time.

The Mayor's assurances were given in an exchange of correspondence made public at City Hall yesterday with Barnett August, executive director of the East Side Chamber of Commerce. Mr. August wrote to Mr. Wagner on Friday that "the pendency of a public project of this size always causes concern in the neighborhood to be affected."

"Building owners are asking us whether they should make repairs; tenants are concerned over prospective termination of their leases; people are wondering when they will have to move," he continued. He asked the Mayor for a "timetable" of project construction.

Mayor Wagner replied yesterday, recalling that the Board of Estimate had approved the expressway in principle on Sept. 15 when it sanctioned the map changes laying out the route. This was done only after many months of delay and argument. Residents of the area complained that the project would disrupt their lives.

### Approval Not Yet Given

Mayor Wagner told Mr. August that before construction could begin, the Board of Estimate must approve the project itself—a step that will require public hearings—and must also vote to acquire title to needed property.

"Even after the city acquired title," Mayor Wagner wrote, "no person would be required to move until after extensive relocation procedures had been followed. No date for formal approval of the project or acquisition of title has been set.

"I assure you, no action directly affecting your people has yet been taken. No hasty action is in sight on the project as a whole. I regret I cannot give you an exact timetable because the project has not yet reached the state where a timetable can be prepared."

The cost of construction of the new expressway is to be met 90 per cent by the Federal Government and 10 per cent by the state.

About 2,200 families, 365 retail stores and 480 non-retail commercial establishments will be displaced by the road.